

**Menasha Joint School District**

**Elementary School World Language Program**

* **How are the classes scheduled?**

The building principals schedule the classes with input from the classroom teachers and the WL (World Language) staff.

* **Which grade levels receive instruction, how often and for how many minutes?**

Kindergarten students meet 2X/wk for a twenty minute period.

Grade 1 students meet 2X/wk for a twenty minute period.

Grade 2 students meet 3X/wk for a twenty minute period.

Grade 3 students meet 3X/wk for a twenty minute period.

Grade 4 students meet 4X for a thirty minute period.

Grade 5 students meet 4Xfor a thirty minute period.

* **Which languages do you offer and why?**

We teach German, Japanese and Spanish in our K-12 WL program and these languages were selected for a specific purpose. There are over 2000 different languages spoken everyday and definitely world language skills will play an important role in business and society as our students become world citizens. Each one of these three languages is a critical language in that it is a stepping stone to learning other languages that are similar in concept, pronunciation and grammar structure. For example, if a student learns Spanish, the student will then be able to pick up another language that is categorized as a romance language (i.e. French, Italian) with greater ease because of the similarities to Spanish. Japanese is a core language for other Asian languages (i.e. Chinese, Korean) and German is a core language for other Germanic languages (i.e. Dutch, English). The administration and WL staff within the district felt that by choosing these three languages, we would be offering our students the best possible choices for continuing study of world languages beyond their years in our schools.

* **Where does the time come from for Elementary WL instruction? How did you coordinate the WL program with the other curricular subjects in the elementary school?**

Our program is content-related; we reinforce, introduce and support the other academic areas of the curriculum through World Language. The WL teachers talk with teachers from each grade level. They discuss units in Social Studies, Science, Math and Language Arts as well as the Fine Arts, Guidance, Computer Literacy, etc. The WL teacher uses this information to coordinate the world language programs with units taught at each grade level. The program enhances and develops the units being taught in core subject areas and special classes at each grade level.

* **Was the program phased in year by year or all grades implemented at the same time?**

Our program was implemented in stages. German, Japanese and Spanish began in Kindergarten and First Grade during the first year of the program (1993). Two elementary schools have Spanish, one has Japanese and two have German, based on enrollment. The following year Grade Two was added to the program. One grade level was added each year until all students, Kindergarten through grade 5, received WL instruction. The elementary program then articulated into the middle school program as well as the high school program, following the same pattern.

* **Is your school a magnet or choice school for WL?**

No, each elementary school in our district has world language instruction. The language for each school was chosen by lottery. If parents would like their student to learn a different language, Wisconsin State law provides school choice for this opportunity.

* **Are all students required to take World Language or could students opt out? How are EEN students handled? How are ESL students handled?**

All students are required to take World Language. The language specialist needs to make accommodations and modifications for students with special needs. Occasionally, a student’s IEP may include release from the requirement if there is an extreme academic deficiency and the student it placed in an inclusive special needs program. This is done only after the parents, teacher, administrator and language specialist have met and agreed to the release.

* **How are students who come to the school mid-year accomodated?**

There are packets prepared ahead of time with vocabulary and phrases appropriate to the grade level for students to use in and out of class. Students have study-buddies or peer tutors to work with them during class as well as before and after school, when high school students studying the language obtain volunteer hour credits to tutor our younger students. DVD’s, podcasts, CD’s, etc. are available for practice and use at home through our library media centers. We work individually with each new student to ensure that they become comfortable in their language class and assess them for success at the level that is appropriate for them.

* **Is the regular classroom teacher present during WL instruction?**

The regular classroom teacher remains in the classroom while WL instruction is being lead by the WL teacher. The time for WL instruction is not considered a preparation period for regular classroom teachers. It is expected that the classroom teacher will take a role in learning the WL along with the children in order to incorporate some WL elements into their regular classroom instruction. Classroom teachers also collaborate closely with the World Language specialists to assist where and when needed during World Language time. World Language classes are taught in the regular classroom setting.

* **Are auxiliary personnel available?**

There are not aides hired specifically for the WL classroom. If a child requires an aide because of a special physical or emotional need, that child’s aide remains in the classroom during WL instruction to help the WL teacher with the needs of this child. Occasionally, there are student teachers, students doing clinicals and parents who voluntarily help out with the WL program.

* **Who teaches the WL class? How many WL teachers do you have at the elementary level?**

The elementary WL classes are taught by certified WL teachers. We currently have 4.5 elementary WL teachers, 3 of whom are full time at the elementary school. All of our teachers in our district who teach at the elementary level have at least a minimum of a PK-12 license in World Language. Two members of our K-12 World Language staff are also certified in regular Elementary Education but this is not a State of Wisconsin licensing requirement.

* **Did you provide training for any existing staff (classroom teachers)?**

In the past we have offered special after school classes for our regular teaching staff in the WL that is being taught at our school. We highly encourage staff members to participate with their students during WL instruction if they are interested in learning the WL. When consistently seek out and offer information to our colleagues about classes being offered about the languages and cultures we teach in our school district.

* **How does your district handle assessment of students in the WL? Do the students receive a report card grade?**

Our students are assessed according to National and State standards as well as district curriculum guidelines. WL teachers use benchmark assessments at each grade level, which include specific tasks to be completed by students, in order to assess their progress in WL classes. Due to the nature of our program, more emphasis is put on oral/aural assessment than reading/writing assessment although all four skills in WL are assessed at the elementary school level.

Our students receive an academic scores 2nd and 4th quarters of the school year, at all grade levels. 1st and 3rd quarters are times for Parent Teacher conferences and portfolios of student work are shared between the student, teacher and their parents at that time. There is a place on the elementary school report card in the core subject area designated for scores in WL. We use the same grading system on the report card as the regular classroom teachers do for other core subject areas.

* **Have you seen any improvements in overall test scores (especially English**)?

While we cannot specifically say that our Standardized Test scores have gone up due to World Language study, we can confidently say that World Language has not had an adverse affect on Standardized Test scores in that we have not had a decrease in scores since we began our program. We are constantly involved in action research in the area of overall assessment scores, etc. as well as the effects that the study of WL will eventually have on each student’s personal and professional life.

* **How is articulation between the elementary and secondary school handled**?

Our WL department consists of all WL teachers grades K-12 and we meet regularly in order to update one another on the progression of our elementary school WL program as well as our entire K-12 WL programs. Teachers in each of the three languages work very closely together in order to ensure that each WL student is receiving comprehensive, on-going instruction in the WL. Decisions about our program are made by our K-12 team of teachers and we base much of the success of our program on the fact that all WL teachers at all levels are involved in each part of our WL program, K-12.

* **What types of materials do you use for the elementary WL classes?**

Because we are a content-related WL program, we use many of the same materials the regular classroom teachers use in the other subject areas being taught at each grade level. Most of our materials are developed by our WL teaching staff for each unit. Because of the oral/aural emphasis of our WL program and the content-related nature of the WL instruction, purchasing a textbook would not be feasible or useful in the WL classroom for our program.

* **Have there been any parent concerns and how are they handled?**

Parent questions, comments and concerns are handled on an individual basis by the WL teacher, sometimes in conjunction with the regular classroom teacher and/or building principal. Our WL staff at the elementary schools has also done surveys of parents, regular classroom teachers, administrators and students on a regular basis to address general concerns as our program has been implemented into the elementary school. In general, the parents and regular teaching staff have been supportive of the elementary WL program and the WL staff has been willing to seriously handle issues and concerns as they arise.

* **Do you have any testimonials from parents or students regarding program successes that you would be willing to share?**

In all of our languages, we have seen students grow to appreciate the beauty of another language and culture. We have countless stories of how our elementary students have been able to communicate with native speakers on family vacations, on the internet, through hosting world exchange students, etc and the opportunities that have been opened up to them because of their study of WL. We see many students who better understand concepts in their other subject areas at school because of the study of the WL. We hear many times from parents how amazed they are at the ease and speed with which they see their own children learning WL, as opposed to the painful process they went through in WL class in Middle and High school. The support for our program and success of our program has come from a vision in our community to offer all of our students a thorough education. That vision includes the realization that studying several world languages will be a critical skill for everyone as we enter the 21st century. This community vision and support was simply stated in an essay written by one of our elementary students on “The Importance of Studying a World Language”. This student concluding their essay by writing:

***I feel very fortunate to be able to have the opportunity to study a world language and culture at my elementary school. If I had a dime for every time an adult told me how lucky I was to be learning a world language at a young age, I’d be rich!***